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ABSTRACT

Although many teachers have had an enduring and positive influence on their students, some teachers' behavior is unprofessional, contributing to youngsters' alienation and reinforcing negative public opinion about the teaching profession. This field study describes various defensive maneuvers, strategies, and pranks that teachers devised and relied on to get through the school year at a midwestern high school. Using a natural history/direct observation approach, a 7-month field study targeting the social studies department of "Roosevelt High School" (a fictitious name for a real school in the midwest) was conducted during 1980-81. This report summarizes study results and focuses on two primary informants representative of the 14 real teachers whose teaching concepts, jokes, likes, and dislikes were sought out continuously. Field workers participated in many out-of-class activities with these teachers and made notes when appropriate. The study disclosed two rival cliques of teachers who treated subject matter, classrooms, the gym, and the professional library as territories to be defended. Each informal group developed strategies for protecting whatever subject matter territory they possessed and laid plans for looting this territory from the other clique. Teachers also devised bulwarks against looting, "raping," and raising general havoc by others within and outside the department. Results are inconsistent with other research findings about teacher collegiality. The informal groups were teachers' response to fatigue, frustration, and distrust resulting from their lowly position in the school hierarchy. Unfortunately, this conduct is unbefitting a professional. Included are 14 references. (MLH)

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Defense of Territory:

A Report of High School Teachers at Work

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Defense of Territory:

A Report of High School Teachers at Work

The work that teachers do is important for the educational well being of society, in general, and for the youth they serve, in particular. There are many women and men whose work in this field has had an enduring and positive influence on their students. The behavior of some teachers is unprofessional, contributing to the disillusion and alienation of youth and supporting negative public opinion about the occupation itself. An honest examination of the behavior of teachers on the job should be the first step that educators take in the direction of reform of education for the 21st century.

The results of this field study offer descriptive detail about the various maneuvers, strategies, and pranks that teachers created in response to their situation and relied upon for making it through the days and weeks of the school year at Roosevelt Senior High School. Elsewhere, I have reported on behaviors engaged in by teachers that were classified as evasive, allowing the men and women to escape from their work at school (Bruckerhoff, 1987). In the present article I examine and discuss the teachers' perceptions and behaviors that make up a repertoire called Defense of the Territory.

Briefly, teachers in the social studies department at Roosevelt Senior High School established and defended territories in subject matter, classrooms, and recreational areas. The findings suggest that this defensive behavior of teachers was an immature response to exigencies of

their particular situation. A result for administrators, students, and parents was provision of support for the commonly held perception that teaching has been and remains a low status occupation. The result for the teachers themselves was exascerbation of an inherently frustrating set of circumstances and avoidance of behavior that might promote changes in policy and practice, that were so badly needed in the particular high school.

The following questions helped to guide this investigation: What makes it possible for teachers to get through their day? Why? What are the sources of these behaviors? What features of the school contribute to these results? What is the character of the teachers' attitudes and perceptions, how are they formed, and what role do they play in the job of teachers? To what extent do these patterns of behavior contribute to or detract from the educational interests of the school? What features of the school contribute to these results? What are the implications for reform of education in the 1990's?

Method of Research

The approach taken for this research was natural history. A natural history approach to the study of teaching emphasizes direct observation of events in a school based upon some conception of human behavior. The researcher begins by observing and analyzing events as they occur naturally in social situations. Techniques of data collection, such as observation and interview, enable the researcher to capture details that identify both explicit and tacit dimensions of a problem relevant to teaching. The basic principles of the method used here were developed by George Homans (1950), Robert Redfield (1955), and George Spindler (1982). The work of Louis M.

Smith (1984) represents current interest in natural history studies of teaching.

The specific features for collection of data during this study were a product of the field worker's familiarity with ethnographic techniques and sensitivity to the character of events unfolding in the situation. In other words, technical features of the method were chosen as the problem gained definition in the field, not beforehand. In general, participation and observation were relied upon most often for access to and understanding of the high school teacher's work. Both planned and spontaneous interviews were used for obtaining an informant's description and explanation of events.

The researcher conducted a field study over a seven month period in the 1980-81 school year, in a town that was given the pseudonym of Elmwood. The target for this research was the social studies department at Roosevelt Senior High School, a fictitious name for a real school in the midwest. The different teachers who made up this department and other members of the faculty and the school, including the chairperson, principal, and superintendent, were aware of the study and willingly gave their consent.

The report focuses on two primary informants, Ross Abraham and Gary Zack, who are abstract characters that are representative of other members of their department. In the field there were fourteen real teachers whose conceptions of teaching and moods, jokes, likes, and dislikes were sought continuously. Field work involved participation that would allow the field worker to feel like one of the teachers and to take on, at least for the time being, their beliefs. There was attendance at classes, hallway supervision, assemblies, department meetings, planning periods, and lunches.

When teachers sneaked to the pool for recreation, the researcher followed along, held their towels, and kept time for laps and the return to work.

Field work included riding in the car pools of teachers, attending union grievance proceedings, sitting in on evaluations by principals, and watching the assistant principal reprimand them for leaving school without permission. When the teachers stopped at a bar on the way home, the researcher was invited to join them for a few beers. We ate pizza and drank more beer on Friday evenings. We stayed up late on wintery nights to talk shop, warming ourselves by a wood stove while sipping herb tea. The spouses, children, and friends of these teachers were as important to the study as colleagues. In truth, these high school teachers formed a community no less dependent upon one another than the tavern patrons in Blue-Collar Aristocrats (LeMasters, 1975).

From the beginning the researcher carried a small notebook to the field site. Whenever it seemed fitting, their words were written in the notebook. During lapses in conversation as much of the setting as possible was described. On occasion note taking had to be postponed and the notebook kept out of site. Clarification of role and procedure in this manner helped insure that the ethnographer remained an unobtrusive character in the field situation (Spindler, 1979). For example, it was not wise to record information when a particularly heated exchange occured between the two groups of teachers in regard to grabbing subject matter territory or when a teacher betrayed his sense of joy when stealing a course from an older colleague. Instead, as soon as possible afterward the field worker would write down as much of the conversation as could be recalled from memory.

Initially, ordinary events in the work place served to sort data.

Included were classes, preparation periods, and lunches. Description and dialogue were typed onto protocol sheets according to these divisions, with notes about date, time, and place. A separate notebook was kept for recording patterns perceived to be emerging as possible explanations or hypotheses. These perceptions were taken to the field on subsequent visits for further investigation. If data supported an hypothesis, the hypothesis was retained and refined. If support was lacking, the hypothesis was discarded. Once an aspect of the informal faculty culture, such as defense of the territory, emerged as an important focus, field study included a search for details which supported these explanatiory concepts and led to other meaningful perceptions.

At all times the field worker remained mindful of Abraham Kaplan's (1963, p. 85) basic scientific question: "What the devil is going on around here?" Careful attention was given to carrying out the ethnography in a systematic and thoughtful manner, so that analysis would give way to synthesis, eventually. On an ongoing basis, the ethnographic description was examined in the light of existing literature and the researcher's understanding of the schoolteacher's work.

The activity of these teachers was viewed as an instance of a more general occurrence: development of a culture among workers occurs in response to the situation at the work place. The teachers created and maintained patterns of behavior which helped individuals get through the work day, work week, and contract year. As one of the teachers explained: "Teaching? There is no meaning to teaching. Without these other guys I would have been gone so long ago it would make your head spin." The defense of territory emerged during the field study as a concept useful for

explaining the purpose served by the informal groups of teachers. In short, the informal culture of teachers helped these men and women cope with disappointing features of the job, but their perceptions and behavior diverted their attention from substantive issues and supported a commonly held belief of teaching as a low status job.

Defense of Territory

In the Territorial Imperative (1966) Robert Ardrey defined territory as "an area of space, whether of water of earth or air, which an animal or group of animals defends as an exclusive preserve" (p. 3). The space through which teachers moved became an important focus for inquiry during this investigation. The teachers' designation and use of exclusive territories was a covert maneuver to protect these areas from intrusions by administrators, students, and teachers in the opposite clique. Defense of territory was a response to a structure of work which placed great emphasis on contact time between teachers and their students for control of the school and excluded teachers from decision making outside of immediate involvement with instruction with students.

Ardrey (1966) also claimed that the human species like other animal species is predacious: "from time to time we shall go out looting and raping and raising havoc in the countryside" (p. 352). The latter qualification helped explain a tendency of individuals and groups to grab territory from others, so as to make their own areas more expansive and secure from intrusions. When the territory was established and border defenses were clear and sturdy, teachers felt confident about chances of surviving the school year.

Space and time coincided in the teachers' conception of territory. Social studies teachers at Roosevelt treated time as they treated space: defensively. This overlap was important for one could not teach without having both. Dan Lortie (1975) writes: "It is of great importance to teachers to feel they have 'reached' their students--their core rewards are tied to that perception" (p. 106). In general, the classroom was the space where teachers worked and the schedule marked out the limits in time for teachers to accomplish something with their students. Defense of particular spaces and times was important, because their continuance contributed in important ways to the work of teachers. Ardrey's definition of territory and the terms ("looting," "raping," and "raising general havoc") imaginatively identified territorial behavior originating within informal groups of teachers in the social studies department at Roosevelt Senior High School.

Other researchers who have studied workers present findings which are relevant to a discussion of territorial defense of teachers. For instance, in his discussion of blue-collar workers, E. E. LeMasters (1977) asked the Wild Irishman, a crane operator, if the results of his work mattered to him. The Wild Irishman's regard for his accomplishments summed up the opinions of others in the tavern called "The Oasis." He said:

> Doc, it's just like going out with a woman. I can enjoy her whether she is pretty or not--but by God it does help if she's easy to look at.
>
> Now you take that building near your office--isn't she a beautiful sonofabitch? When we put that top floor on and you could

> begin to see her final shape I felt good all over. It's nice to think that when I'm dead and gone that sonofabitch will still be there looking out over the lake and as pretty as ever (p. 24).

Out in the community were numerous physical structures that these men could look upon with feelings of pride in accomplishment of something good. The building that the Wild Irishman referred to and all the other things would be testimony to superior craftsmanship long after the people who made them were gone. The men who socialized at the Oasis felt an affinity to the people responsible for the pyramids in Egypt, Easter Island, and Central America. Their work in stone and concrete imparted a sense of permanence.

Minnesota, the old machinist in Robert Schrank's (1979) study, had enjoyed the same sense of satisfaction in his work. The lathe, stethoscope, and countless other instruments were important tools which he used to solve problems of machines and materials he worked into custom-made parts. But Minnesota's age and drinking problem, like that of the blue-collar workers LeMasters (1977) studied, suggested that attitudes toward work were changing for many workers. Schrank's (1979) experience in other jobs, namely as miner and farmhand, further clarified the problem of dissatisfaction among workers.

In short, miners witnessed bucket loads of coal unearthed from below and farmhands saw bushels of beans picked from plants, but neither of them ever came in contact with the total concrete product of their labor. These people behaved defensively about their jobs, because they could not point to what they did. Furthermore, their work was never done. A mine shaft might go to China; a plowed field needed harrowing, seeding, fertilizing,

cultivating, picking, plowing, harrowing, etc., infinitely. Another belief they held which helped explain defensive behavior among these workers was that anyone with simple skills, brute strength, and uncommon endurance could take their place.

Is the territorial defense of teachers attributable to an uncertain outcome and unfinished work? Lortie (1975) studied the sense of achievement among teachers in Five Towns. His results indicate that it is characteristic of teachers to hope for universalistic outcomes, but they "feel pride at results which fall below universalistic standards" (p. 132). This discrepancy between what teachers expressed as the ideal standard and what they took pride in was attributed by Lortie (1975) to the "endemic uncertainties" of the schoolteacher's work. Briefly, while uncertainty of outcome is common to most lines of work, Lortie's (1975) research shows that uncertainty is more serious in teaching. The organization of work in fields like nursing, carpentry, law, and so on provides formal mechanisms which check one's progress with competencies and award rank and promotion for public recognition of an individual's status within the career. Not so in teaching.

Roosevelt's teachers (especially those in the Rebel clique) expressed frustration about the effects of their teaching. As his colleague stood by, one teacher gave this explanation of his effectiveness:

> My failure rate is about 99%. Well, maybe that is a little exaggerated; 95% is closer to the truth. You can't succeed in this work. You can only fail. To quote Leo Tolstoy, you are like a fly on a great river. No matter what you do, the river keeps rolling on by.

The seriousness evident in their facial expressions and the teachers' firm resolve (and others in subsequent interviews) was convincing, despite persistent questioning from me. It was their belief that a teacher is lucky to have a student in class who demonstrated clearly that he or she learned what the teacher had to offer. The uncertainties about outcomes of their work coupled with a formal organization which overlooked the worker's need of recognition, reward, and relief, contributed to defensive behavior among teachers in this social studies department.

In addition to problems stemming from uncertainties endemic to the work, Lortie (1975) also argues that teachers do not have a very highly developed technical culture. The shared body of knowledge critical to participation in the career is limited because the structure of work prevents collective activity. The situation is described figuratively by Lortie (1975) with: "Teachers act in fishbowls" (p. 70). Like miners and farmhands, schoolteachers have few technical skills and rely upon strength and endurance to accomplish their work.

Teachers at Roosevelt were at least vaguely aware that their work entailed few technical skills. When a senior student told a teacher she was planning on majoring in education in college, the teacher said: "People who go into education are looking for an easy out. Take a look at the student teachers we have here. If you want it somewhat easy, major in education. If you want it somewhat hard, try an area of science." The message was like a mask thrown up to frighten away the youth. The teacher knew his work was hard; he also knew that ease of entry into the career meant that he could be replaced by a tyro. The student, like Schrank (1979), the would-be coal

miner, could not reopen the subject. She should take his advice and find work in some other field. Defense of territory was a pattern of behavior critical to the work of teachers at Roosevelt.

Findings

Four distinct territories and accompanying valuations were delineated. Those territories were subject matter, classroom, gym, and professional library. Since a social studies teacher could not function without a subject matter specialty, this aspect of territorial defense will be taken up first.

Subject Matter

The social studies teachers thought of themselves as a subject matter specialists. Regardless of how good or poor the university preparation, they were proud of this image and defense of other territories could be seen as extensions of the teachers' activities with subject matter. Carving out and defending a niche in the area of subject matter was believed to be necessary for work. If done effectively, administrators could attend only to "petty concerns," students would be "in their place," and members of the other clique would remain "dumb as a post." Within their informal groups teachers developed rationale and means of establishing subject matter territories to assure the continuation of cliques and individuals in the social studies department.

Department meetings were usually held for the purpose of answering "What should be taught?" and "Whose subject matter is it, anyway?" When the social studies teachers addressed these questions during formal meetings, one could observe their manner of fighting over subject matter territories.

I asked Gary Zack, the Guard's "corner boy" (See Whyte, 1967), to explain the department meeting history. His answer follows:

> Our department meetings were the closest thing to war in the whole central part of the state in terms of volatile verbalizations. I think of some of those meetings when they would pound on the floor, and walk out. And nothing was accomplished. There was a very big clash--there still is.

During these clashes the Rebel clique wanted to change the focus for social studies curriculum and was accused by Guards of "trying to ram something through." The Guards meanwhile, resisted the proposals for change and were charged with "stonewalling" by the Rebels. Whatever the nomenclature, both cliques were "looting," "raping," and "raising general havoc" to establish some or all of the social studies subject matter as an exclusive territory. This was a game, but it had a serious tone.

The following example illustrates the tactic of stonewalling for territorial defense on the part of Guards. About thirty minutes into the meeting, Gabe Samuels interrupted the presentation of a proposal by Ralph Gaines with:

> "All right. Your mind's pretty much made up. Is that what you're saying?"
>
> "No. We are looking for the thrust of the junior high and senior high schools and seeing how this thing all fits together," Ralph Gaines answered.

"I disagree wholeheartedly! You're trying to ram something through in a week, period! I think it's ridiculous. This is much too serious a problem to get it through in a short time by slapping down some idea on a piece of paper," Gabe Samuels argued.

"We have already done a lot of research. We are beyond that. We've been on this for three years," Ralph Gaines said.

"But you're wrong! You've been bringing this in here and it's not what we worked on. If you are asking us to come up with a whole redesign in a few days, and the way this committee is going to do it anyway, then say it's your own committee's. Don't pawn it off as our work. To ram it through in one week is ridiculous," Gabe Samuels said.

The argument by Gabe Samuels represents the perception that Guards stonewalled by arguing for more time, complaining that only a few people from the other clique were involved, and charging that the contents of proposals were false representations of input from supporting sources, such as administrators and elementary or junior high school teachers. Never mind that they, the Guards, did not volunteer to be on the committee to reform the K-12 curriculum. Implicit in this behavior of Guards is the fundamental lesson of work from Robert Schrank (1979): "How to work less in order to make the task easier" (p. 6). The cumulative effect of these arguments was postponement of the point at which a decision would be made. In the meanwhile, Guards had confidence that their subject matter territory would not be taken from them by the Rebels.

Aspects of the ramming technique are evident also in the above example. Rebels showed impatience with the process for change in the department and, working within their informal group, devised ways to rush things through. The "underground" classification given to teachers by colleagues (but not documented) in Wolcott's (1977, p. 208) study would apply here, for not only did others believe the Rebels operated clandestinely, research showed that they did so. The following explanation from a teacher in the Rebel clique shows how Rebels attempted to trap obstinate and unsuspecting Guards.

During the department meeting the teacher referred to distributed a questionnaire to all members with this notice said loudly twice: "Be sure to put your name on it, so we can come back to you for clarification." When the meeting was over and all had gone home, he exposed the trap to the observer.

> "We're just waiting for the questionnaires to be returned, so that we can read what these other people (Guards) put down. Just wait. What they put down they are going to be held to doing. I can't wait. They aren't going to put something up to us that we haven't seen ten times before. We want to know <u>who wrote what</u> on those papers. We've run it."

That this was an organized effort by an informal group is indicated in the speaker's choice of the pronoun "we." Effectively carried out, this "looting" scheme would secure highly valued subject matter territory (namely, senior level college prep courses) for sustained members of the Rebel clique. One of the Rebels offered further explanation.

> "The bottom line with this proposal is that Guard courses will be reduced to electives. They (Guards) will do anything to prevent that. If that happens, then kids won't take their courses and they will have to teach required American history courses for sophomores and juniors. That means maybe I'd take over teaching all seniors and have a few juniors."

The Rebel clique had developed a strategy for grabbing subject matter territory from Guards. The benefits to Rebels were: greater job security, satisfaction, and prestige. Guards used stonewalling for the same effect. Seen in this light defense of subject matter territory was a covert maneuver developed by the faculty subculture for the purpose of creating work situations more favorable to teachers. Philip Cusick's (1983) report about the ways teachers in the urban schools he studied established new courses is relevant here because those teachers seemed to act independently for the same purpose as Roosevelt's teachers acted collectively: to loot territory that would be attractive to students.

A final point about defense of subject matter territory concerns the teachers' exchange of content area readings, films, guest lectures, and so on. These exchanges always occurred within cliques. To explain, the teachers considered the Xerox machine to be "an absolutely indispensable tool," making it possible to "get away from the textbook and have academic freedom." In a matter of minutes after finding an article in some magazine or newspaper, a teacher could have a copy made for every student in class.

In that way one did not have to "summarize these things and then lecture on them--students read it themselves and it is so much better."

But teachers were selective in distributing such material, for it was the territory. To explain further, a teacher who was using the Xerox machine spoke as follows about copies he made of a recently published article on El Salvador: "I don't give this out to every rum dum in the building. There are only 10% who are educable. I only give it to people I think there is any hope for." Those 10% were members of this teacher's clique. Materials for instruction were an important part of a clique's subject matter territory and they were guarded carefully.

Although the limits of class periods were established by the administration, there was frequent "looting" of teacher time by students, colleagues, and administrators. Teachers resented this practice and worked out ways that helped to prevent others from stealing this aspect of subject matter territory in the school. Teachers protected the time set aside for teaching (i.e., the class period) and for preparation to teach. When the bell rang announcing the start of class, for example, the teacher wanted to proceed with uninterrupted attention given to lecturing students. Even though he might be having an involved discussion with a colleague beforehand, the conversation had to terminate. "My attention is divided now," Ross Abraham explained to another member of the Rebel clique just after the bell rang. "The students are here." With that said he began his lecture.

However strong the desire was for uninterrupted lecturing, there was always a good chance that something would happen to break the planned sequence. It was often a phone call from the office about records of

student absenteeism. From time to time a member of the teacher's clique would take time away. For example, Roland Wilkes knocked on Robert Silvius's door during class one day to inform him that the principal wanted to reprimand him for leaving school early without signing out. Wilkes was worried, for he and the others in the car pool were implicated. Silvius explained his reaction at the end of class with: "I hate finding out about things like that during class. It throws me." The notice from Wilkes disturbed Silvius and cut into his teaching in terms of both time and space. Interruptions such as the latter were tolerated and the concerns addressed, but teachers did not steal time across clique lines.

Students would interrupt the teacher to request that they do something else for the period than what was planned. In the following example a teacher explains how he argued with his students about what to do during class time--what they wanted or what he had planned. He related this view of the event:

> At the same time that the fourth hour sociology class was scheduled to meet, all students in the school were invited to attend a presentation given by one of the men who had been held hostage by the Iranians. The class begged me to take them and they got rowdy, because I refused to give up the hour for that.
>
> I said no, because it was not what we were studying and I saw no educational value in it. They said: "We are not going to do what you want us to do." They got down right obnoxious and I lost my temper a little bit. I said I was used to talking to the wall

in here anyway, so if you want to turn your desks around and face the wall, you can and I will continue to lecture anyway. All but four did and I conducted my lesson as I would have had they not turned around and it went that way for the whole hour.

They were quiet. When the bell rang, they turned their desks around without my telling them and went out without saying much at all. Just kind of walked out with a frown on their faces. I said: "Thanks for being such a good class. Every class should be like that." It was better that way, actually. At least I didn't have to look at them groveling in self-pity.

The above example illustrates that teachers met an intrusion of their time with willful resistance. Whether against encroachments from administrators, teachers, or students, teachers believed that defense of time for subject matter instruction was crucial for protecting their "little domains" in the social studies content area.

A principal might chance assignment of an extra prep to a teacher in the fall semester, but not in the spring. As one teacher explained:

"The spring semester is just not the time to do it; I will work it down (against the principal) to where I am equal to the others. The fall semester is the time for a heavy load as there are more breaks for teachers to prepare."

Teachers openly expressed defensiveness toward others (administrators, teachers, and students) over their perceived right to time for instruction of students. Teachers in the Rebel clique, for instance, did not resist assignment of new courses or an extra load. They simply did not want any assignment to interfere with their efforts to finish working with students in courses they had started. If students made a request at the start of class to go and see a special but not required performance, they were told: "That is the last thing I want you to do. What I want you to do now is take out your notebooks." During department meetings, according to Garfield Stevens, the two cliques would "square off" over the issue of time, "bickering and protecting territory."

A second territory--the classroom--was the most highly valued physical space among teachers in the social studies department. The classroom contributed to possibilities for built-in and secret escapes committed within the school, further explaining how "looting and raping and raising general havoc" evolved within the faculty culture at Roosevelt (Bruckerhoff, 1987). The "looting," etc. is in reference to teachers' transgressing the bargaining contract, informal commitments to students, and general faculty responsibilities by hiding out during the school day.

The Classroom

As one would expect, the teacher's place during the school day was the classroom. With these teachers, though, it was more so by personal choice than by administrative assignment. The classroom was a physical space marked off by the administration as an area within which the teacher would work with students for certain periods of the day.

The teacher defined the classroom as a territory ("my turf") and defended it against any who would intrude: administrators, colleagues, students, parents. Interior decoration by the teacher made the area a personal, physical domain to be used at designated times for display of his personal domain--subject matter specialization. The informal groups were important for their influence on the assignment to and use of rooms by individual teachers in the social studies department. For example, the informal system influenced the principal's decision to assign Roy Finley and Gary Zack to rooms on opposite sides of the second story of the high school building.

The teachers' activity in relation to the classroom indicated that it was a highly valued territory. Some trespassers were tolerated; a few were expelled. People in other lines of work behave similarly and, as Schrank (1979) notes in a comparison of workers in the Packard Motor Car factory with other workers, the structure of work may go far to explain the character of this defensiveness. A teacher's designation of the classroom as his territory was revealed through activities in regard to the decor of the room, daily schedule, and classroom access.

Although decisions about the design of the room were made by the architect, contractor, and school authorities, the teacher determined how the interior would be arranged and used. In this way the teacher transformed an institutional setting (a simple, boxlike room) into an area marked by personal effects and touch. Through these activities the teacher mediated conditions laid down by others, most notably, the school authorities. Doing so increased his chances of preserving something of himself within the institutional complex. In short, a personalized

classroom helped the teacher put distance between himself and the institution.

The first thing for the researcher to do after arriving in Elmwood was to make contact with the informants. "Where should we meet?" Ross Abraham was asked over the phone. "Where else? I'll be waiting for you in my room," he replied. At 3:30 P.M. the researcher was walking down the second floor hallway--lost--and saw a man up ahead, leaning against a doorjamb. "Where the hell have you been?" He inquired. "It's almost time to leave." He led me through the doorway and showed me his room. It was like most of the others at Roosevelt. When one crossed the threshold, though, it became apparent that this area was Mr. Abraham's territory. Within these walls he conducted classes, met with parents, confided in trusted colleagues, and prepared lessons.

Inside, whatever was moveable was arranged so as to look in and towards the front. Whatever was fixed was used in such a way as to accent the front. Large windows made up one wall and flooded the room with sun light. Dry wall was hung elsewhere to make up the walls and was painted white. A blackboard filled a wall and immediately before it was the teacher's desk. The teacher's activity and arrangements made this the front of the room. There was a tall storage cabinet in a corner nearby, a two drawer filing cabinet was next to the desk, and some low level cabinets with shelves were along the two walls adjacent to the blackboard wall. There was no furniture next to the rear wall of the room.

To break up the bland whiteness which would otherwise stare in at him, Mr. Abraham had hung some large posters. A large bulletin board was hung on the wall where the door was and pinned to it were a number of magazine and

newspaper clippings. There was a large faced clock above the door and next to it a public address speaker with a face as large as the clock's. Directly beneath these were a phone, pencil sharpener, and thermostat. Thirty moveable student desks were arranged in five straight rows and faced the teacher's desk. There was evidence throughout that the room was reconstructed so that the desk served as the vantage point for Mr. Abraham. He used it to better his chances for controlling the work place.

The administration had prepared a schedule of classes that was of assistance to them with making plans for the school day, enrollment of students and teacher assignments. Figure 3 shows Mr. Abraham's daily schedule.

Figure 3

Schedule of Classes

TEACHER	BASE	1	2	3	4	5A
Abraham	259	History	Sociology	259	Sociology	Lunch
		5B	6	7	8	
		Prep	Economics	History	Conference	

The only time when he could leave school grounds legitimately was during the thirty minute lunch break. If he chose to leave, school policy dictated that he sign himself out at the principal's office, tell where he

was going, and sign himself back in immediately upon returning. Teachers seldom left school during the day. On those few times when they did leave either it was on some business for the school (e.g., working on the school's promotional literature at the district office) or it was a secret escape (See Bruckerhoff, in press). They spent most of their free time in the classroom.

For example, Mr. Abraham was proctor of a study period in his classroom during period three, but if all of the students had excuses (absence, illness, or a pass to the library) he gained the equivalent of a prep period. This was an opportunity to make use of established territory for a built-in escape. Mr. Abraham took advantage of it when circumstances allowed, working without disturbance on something personal or professional in his territory.

To the social studies teacher at Roosevelt, the Schedule of Classes was a deed to a base (classroom) with his ownership rights written in terms of subject matter specialization, space, and time. The only one who entered and exited a base intrepidly was the teacher to whom it was assigned. For most of the school day he was there both by assignment and by choice. Strength of the latter was indicated by his preference to occupy the area even when the schedule allowed time to move freely through other areas of the school. With the exception of department meetings which were held in the chairperson's classroom, one never found a Guard and a Rebel in the same classroom. Whatever encounters they had (albeit brief) were in the public territory: hallways, staircases, or teacher's lounge.

The administration turned Mr. Heidman's classroom into a study hall during his prep period and had a Guard scheduled as proctor. Mr. Heidman

considered this to be an intolerable intrusion upon his territory. "I can't stand being around him. Just his presence. He's here as a subtle form of punishment for me (from the administration)." Mr. Heidman always left before the coach arrived and returned only after the coach left. His territory was not invaded if he was absent from the classroom.

If he was not scheduled to teach, then Ross Abraham was in his classroom alone and preferred not to be disturbed by anyone. Before period one and after period seven Ross was sitting at his desk correcting student papers, writing, or reading some book, magazine, or newspaper. Occasionally one of the teachers in the Rebel clique would stop in to visit. These intrusions were tolerated, if done by one who was seeking membership. Sustained members were always welcome. However, if a Guard showed up at the door, his presence was resented and something would be done to send him away.

The teachers expressed territorial behavior regarding the classroom in another way. Although it was against the rules, some teachers ate their lunches in their classrooms. The stratagem for this activity included closing the classroom door; turning out the lights; and sitting at the back of the room in a student's desk out of sight, should anyone look through the narrow window next to the classroom door. According to one teacher:

> "This is <u>my</u> time in <u>my</u> territory. Back here I can belch out loud if I want to. I don't have to excuse myself. I can stuff food down and not worry about what someone else thinks about it. It gives me a chance to be in a situation where I don't have to deal with

people. I don't have to listen to anybody who doesn't really have anything to say."

To this teacher and others in the social studies department, the classroom was a territory defined in terms of subject matter, space and time. For approximately 30 minutes per day the teacher defined it as an exclusive area for private, "backstage" activities (cf. Goffman, 1959). The latter use emphasized the importance of the classroom for a teacher's work: complete possession of this physical territory meant that a teacher was relieved from having to "deal with people" in accordance with the structure of work characteristic of this high school.

Gym and Professional Library

During certain periods of the day, the Guards established the gym as exclusive territory for getting some form of exercise to "stay alert and get rid of aggression." For the same purpose, those in the Rebel clique "looted" the professional library. These teachers felt that they suffered from a loss of freshness during the day. If one had a reserve of freshness, then one was more responsive (alert) and less reactionary, particularly when involved with students. By contrast, if one allowed freshness to drain away, aggressive actions would predominate: Rebels would argue with students; Guards would roughhouse with students. Members of the informal groups cooperated to establish and maintain territories wherein they could exercise or study without discovery by superordinates. Exercise and study helped preserve freshness.

The teachers' establishment of the gym and professional library as exclusive territories during certain periods of the day was important for

their work in school, because teachers believed they had to "get away from it for a while (run and relax) in order to keep from going mental." Defense of these territories, like that of other spaces in the school, was subtle; without entre the territory and its defense could be overlooked easily. The implications for a teacher, though, were serious enough to cause even the more righteous within the clique to transgress the bargaining contract in order to find relief from established conditions for work at the school.

Since defense of territory in the gym or professional library during the school day (especially the "duty free lunch hour") often involved a breach of the bargaining contract, it entailed a secret escape. It was against the rules of the formal organization of teachers (the union) and school authorities. Regarding the former, according to the bargaining contract: "Teachers may leave school grounds during the lunch period, but shall devote lunch period time in excess of the thirty minute period to professional responsibilities." To superordinates the term "professional responsibilities" meant hallway supervision; to the Guards it meant an opportunity to spend part or all of their lunch period running, lifting weights, using gymnastic apparatus, and so on. Contact sports or high visibility sports, like basketball, were avoided. For those in the Rebel clique, it meant an opportunity to escape for private study.

The teachers' exclusive use of an area for secretly getting exercise during the day emphasized the importance to the teachers' work of having a territory for gaining some relief from the structure of work. The following record of a trip to the swimming pool by two Guards conveys a sense of this behavior complex.

Over the Christmas holidays two teachers made plans to get exercise by swimming in the school's pool. "This is not strictly legal, but it helps (to exercise)," Gerald Miller explained as he led me through the hallways in search of his partner. "I must find Garfield or I can't go swimming," he continued. We looked in the locker rooms and coaches' offices. Finally, the partner was found in the gym. "Where have you been?" Gerald asked. "We have to hurry if we want to get in today." They had missed one another by a minute or so when searching the locker room.

They ran into the coaches' locker room, changed into swim suits, and ran to the pool. I was asked to keep time and watch for administrators. They swam for five laps and then ran back to the locker room. Total time in the water was seven minutes. "It was worth it," Gerald said. While they were dressing, two other teachers from their clique entered the locker room. They had been lifting weights. A third, Guy Harris, stepped out of the shower.

"See, there is one of the fellows that run," Gerald said pointing to Guy.

"This is what is called mental health," Guy said. "We got until ten after twelve. That's when the last bell rings."

"I'm swimming with Garfield on Mondays and Wednesdays now," Gerald related to Guy.

"That's easier than running," Guy said. "I don't have enough time to cool down after a run."

"I have to do this. I have the blahs," Gerald said.

The first buzzer sounded. "This is it. Now we've got five

minutes," Gerald said while tying his shoe. He left the coaches' locker rom and headed for the hair dryer mounted at shoulder height on a wall in the students' locker room. He slammed the button with his hand and shoved his head into the stream of hot air. Guy, left behind, yelled: "Well, you could at least wait for me."

"What time does it say up there?" Gerald asked me.

I looked up at the clock on the wall and said: "12:07."

"What time is it exactly!" He shouted back.

"12:07," I yelled, so everyone could hear.

"This is cutting it pretty close," he said.

It was now every man for himself. Gerald's hair was still wet when we left the gym. He combed it while we took the most direct route to his classroom. At the bottom of the stair to the second floor he had one minute before the second buzzer sounded announcing the start of his class. He raced up the stairs and was gone.

Collusion of clique members was essential for success with a routine of any kind, but since, as in this instance a physical territory was required when perpetrated within the school, solidarity was crucial. To explain further, the rule from school authorities regarding use of the pool in the gym was that no one was to swim alone. To help avoid injury of any kind, Guards did not exercise alone in any way.

When these teachers were seen exercising together in the gym or playing fields, there was the appearance of normative conduct. If one of the school authorities caught a group of Guards exercising, there was the sense of

security for each and all that comes from a collectivity. In other words, somebody in the group would be able to dissuade an authority figure from emphasizing or even recognizing an infraction of the rules. Finally, one or more companions meant more eyes and ears could be on the look out for superordinates. In short, both the territory and the secret escape from the work routine were guarded carefully by these teachers.

Since a secret escape of this kind meant leaving one's base (classroom), there was need of a decoy and alibi in the event that a principal would come looking for the teacher who was absent from his base. To avoid discovery of a secret escape, a clique member who was not exercising or studying would decoy the principal on behalf of the others. When pressed about the teacher who was absent, the decoy would give the principal the agreed upon alibi (e.g., in the john, running off material, making a phone call, and so on). When the teacher returned to his base, he was tipped off by the decoy if the principal was looking for him.

To sum up, teachers acted in concert within their informal groups to set up areas within the school wherein they could escape for "mental health" or to "stay fresh." This behavior complex was an important contribution to the teachers' work from the informal systems. Guards "looted" the gym and playing fields for exclusive territory; Rebels "looted" the professional library for private study. These were among the more serious ways in which the social studies teachers made their work in school more bearable. They were done in secret. There was no indication that any teachers were in such good standing with the administration that they could get their schedules adjusted for second and third jobs or go to a local cafe and take an

extended lunch period (cf. Cusick, 1983, pp. 97-98). The informal systems were created by teachers for teachers.

Rebels valued study highly. They preferred to devote time that was not scheduled for teaching to reading in professional journals, current events magazines, newspapers, and books. Since there was no time scheduled in the day for such activity, and because the administration, in the opinion of Robert Silvius, "took a dim view of the matter" (i.e., did not trust teachers to study), Rebels would escape to the professional library in order to preserve freshness.

The professional library could be entered only from the main library. Inside this room were various professional publications, newspapers, etc. There was a large table with chairs, end tables, and four stuffed chairs. A phone and a clock appeared to be conspicuous on the walls. The teachers who escaped to the professional library came for study. They did not want to be disturbed by anyone. They defined this territory more or less as a sanctuary; people spoke to one another (usually a greeting) only out of courtesy. The professional library was the space established by Rebels for an escape within the school.

Summary and Conclusion

Subject matter, classrooms, and the gym and professional library were treated as territories by social studies teachers at Roosevelt. Within their informal groups teachers developed strategies for protecting whatever subject matter territory they possessed and laid plans for "looting" additional territory from the other clique. In this sense, subject matter was spacial. The most highly valued space was required senior level course work. Teachers fought on a group level or with the backing of their

informal group for exclusive rights to it. The classroom, gym, and professional library were physical spaces within the building that teachers changed from institutional arrangements into domains for opportunity to enjoy personal interests and needs or to display professional expertise. Teachers also defended against intruders the time established for teaching subject matter.

The defense of territories that evolved as a result of the teachers' informal group activity served implicitly to provide teachers with a bulwark against "looting," "raping," and "raising general havoc" by others both within and outside of the social studies department at Roosevelt Senior High School. From this viewpoint the teachers' informal systems had important implications for the teachers both in terms of its value on a day to day basis and in terms of the career of the teacher.

The results reported here are inconsistent with Cusick's (1983) findings about collegiality among teachers. Roosevelt's social studies teachers were not required to join the cliques, but being a seeking or sustained member of the Rebel or Guard clique held important implications for the individual teacher. In short, field study data indicated that a system had evolved at the informal level which helped a teacher obtain and secure territory that was perceived as necessary for working in the school. Without the supporting mechanisms created by the cliques, a lone teacher in the social studies department was defenseless and his or her tenure at Roosevelt was questionable.

As is typical of schools elsewhere, a top down hierarchy within the Elmwood Public School District left teachers next to the bottom in terms of authority. The ways in which social studies teachers interacted informally

suggested that membership in an informal group was important for mitigating conditions set up by authorities for the high school in Elmwood. The teachers wanted to teach, but believed they had little or no say in decisions and policymaking which had a direct impact on the situation in the classroom. Following the interests of influential adults in the community of Elmwood, administrators hired high school teachers to present their subject matter specialties in the classroom and to devote time to formally recognized co-curricular activities.

The teachers perceived the organization of work as productive of fatigue, frustration, and distrust. The teachers' response was to create within their informal systems particular mechanisms for coping with the various frustrations and disappointments of the job. In effect, the teachers' defense of territory more or less made sure that the teachers' present interests would be protected, their circumstances of work would remain the same, and they would avoid a substantive examination and treatment of the problems associated with high school teaching.

We expect that people will create ways of dealing with whatever circumstances they face at work and elsewhere. This process, involving different individuals on a voluntary basis, leads to the development of a culture that is specific to the situation and somehow useful or valuable to everyone involved. The findings reported here also suggest that the physical and social environments of the situation influence the character of the work place culture. However, the results of a particular cultural process can be either productive or detractive for the whole social situation in question.

At Roosevelt Senior High School the teachers' defense of territory provided teachers with some assurance that their classrooms, subject matter and so on would not be lost easily to a raiding party conducted by other members of the faculty or the administration. But these benefits are individualistic and selfish concerns. The behaviors devised to sustain them are unprofessional, more representative of the adolescents served by the teachers than the professional conduct befitting a high school teacher. Efforts to correct situations similar to this one should focus attention on the characteristics of both the organization of work and of the men and women who practice teaching and administration in the school.

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